

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00

LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 DOTE-00 /050 W

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R 171708Z MAR 76

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 776

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 1854

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E.O. 11652: /A

TAGS: EAIR, EIND, ETRD, EEC

SUBJECT: EC AIRCRAFT POLICY

REF: A) ROME 4206, B) PARIS 6814, C) EC BRUSSELS 239

1. IN CONNECTION WITH VISIT OF BRESLER (EUR/RPE) AND SAMMON (COMMERCE), ON MARCH 15 WE MET WITH RICHARD NOBBS, AN EC COMMISSION OFFICIAL WORKING ON THE EC AIRCRAFT POLICY. THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON US-EUROPEAN COLLABORATION ON AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT AND VARIOUS FRENCH OPTIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO NOBBS, BOEING HAS TOLD EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS THAT THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THE PROPOSED AIRBUS A-300 B-10 VERSION BECAUSE BOEING'S STUDIES OF THE BOEING 7X7 HAVE SHOWN THEM THAT THE B-10 IS A REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE 7X7. AND, DIFFERING FROM EC AIRCRAFT POLICY CHIEF PREVIDI (SEE REFTEL C), NOBBS SAID FRENCH (AEROPATIALE) AND OTHER EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURERS DO NOT RULE OUT COLLABORATION WITH BOEING ON THE AIRBUS B-10. FROM THE EC COMMISSION'S VIEW HOWEVER, SUCH COLLABORATION SHOULD FOLLOW AGREEMENT BY THE EUROPEANS ON AN AIRBUS B-10 PROGRAM.

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3. NOBBS SIAD THAT AN AIRBUS B-10 PROGRAM POSED A

DILEMMA FOR THE FRENCH. THE FRENCH ARE INVESTING HEAVILY IN THE NEW CFM-56 GE/SNECMA TEN-TON ENGINE, WHICH COULD POWER THE PROPOSED MERCURE 200, WHICH DESSAULT IS DISCUSSING WITH DOUGLAS. THE AIRBUS B-10 WOULD USE A GE OR ROLLS ROYCE ENGINE AND WOULD COMPETE TO SOME EXTENT WITH THE MERCURE 200 AND DRAIN OFF SCARCE RESOURCES FROM A MERCURE 200 PROGRAM. THE FRENCH THEREFORE MAY FAVOR THE DESSAULT PLANE ALTHOUGH THEY COULD ULTIMATELY PARTICIPATE IN BOTH AIRCRAFT PROGRAMS. NOBBS NOTED THE EC WOULD PREFER THAT FRANCE CHOOSE THE AIRBUS B-10 WHICH WOULD BE MORE EUROPEAN. IN PASSING, NOBBS SAID THAT THE GERMANS HAVE PUT A LOT OF MONEY IN RESEARCH ON THE B-10, THE ITALIANS ARE INTERESTED IN BILATERAL COLLABORATION WITH THE US COMPANIES AND THE BRITISH ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH NATIONALIZATION ISSUES. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE FUTURE OF A EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT POLICY IS UP TO THE FRENCH.

3. REGARDING THE SPINELLI PAPER, NOBBS SAID THAT REACTIONS OF COMMISSIONS OF THE EC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE THAT LOOKED AT THE PAPER WERE, IN GENERAL, FAVORABLE BUT RECOGNIZED THAT THEIR APPROBATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT. HE STRESSED THAT THE PAPER REPRESENTED A FIRST POSITION WHICH WOULD BE MODIFIED DOWNWARD AND AGREED THAT THE IDEA OF A COMMON EC FINANCING OF R & D WOULD BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO SELL TO THE MEMBER STATES. HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), JOINT VENTURES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ECBRU02702
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760101-0979
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760353/aaaabucw.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ROME 4206, 76 PARIS 6814, 76 EC BRUSSELS 239
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <28 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC AIRCRAFT POLICY
TAGS: EAIR, EIND, ETRD, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006